complete falsification of Governmental records on nutrition, and thereby artificially showing the decline in the proportion of children who are malnourished? Secondly, is she aware of the fortification of food in Gujarat and the benefits it has had? what is the Government's assessment of that?

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Sir, Gujarat is not the only State which does fortification. There is international experience as well as national awareness on how valuable fortification of food is. There is no dispute on that. I have myself said on record that we must fortify food, we must give nutrition ...*(Interruptions)*...I did not catch his other point.

SHRI ARUN SHOURIE: I would like to know whether you are aware of a comprehensive note circulated by a Member of the National Advisory Board, another non-constitutional body, showing the wholesale falsification of malnutrition statistics in Government surveys and in Government records, which artificially shows that the proportion of children who are malnourished, has declined.

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: I don't think there is any falsification. It has not declined. That is precisely what we are saying. I appreciate what you are talking about. But it has not declined. The question put by her addresses this issue when she said that it has declined only by one per cent. She has said it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question hour is over.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO STARRED QUESTIONS

Reservation for SCs/STs in private sector

*245. SHRI BHAGIRATHI MAJHI: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether private companies follow reservation policy for SCs/STs, with regard to appointment for technical/non-technical posts in their companies;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the names of companies following these norms;

(c) if not, whether Government would give any direction about it; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MEIRA KUMAR): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) In pursuance of the commitment contained in the National Common Minimum Programme to initiate a dialogue with Industry and other associations to fulfil the aspirations of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes youth, a Group of Ministers was formed. The Group met five times and also held consultations with the representatives of Apex Industry Associations.

To carry forward the process of dialogue, a Coordination Committee has been constituted under the chairmanship of the Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister. This Committee is serviced by the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion. The Committee has held

discussions with representatives of Apex Industry Chambers/Associations under the chairmanship of Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister. The following points emerged during discussions:

(i) Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM) and PHD Chambers of Commerce and Industry (PHDCCI) have evolved a Code of Conduct of Affirmative Action. Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) has also agreed to soon evolve a similar plan of action.

(ii) Industry Associations are willing to intensify their efforts in developing the skill sets and developing entrepreneurial abilities amongst SC/ST persons.

(iii) There was a general agreement on positive discrimination in employment in favour of SC/ST persons *i.e.* other things being equal SC/ST persons will be given prefenence.

(iv) Industry Chambers are agreeable to reporting of data on SC/ST employment on voluntary basis.

(v) Ombudsman will be appointed by Industry Associations to monitor the compliance with the voluntary Code of Conduct.

Employment for disabled in private sector

*246. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is proposed to provide incentives to private sector, to employ physically challenged persons:

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reaction of the private sector thereto?

THE MINISTER OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MEIRA KUMAR): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. A scheme sanctioned by the Government envisages payment of employer's contribution to Employees Provident Fund (EPF) and Employees State Insurance (ESI) for the first three years for providing employment to persons with disabilities. The benefit of the scheme is for the persons with monthly wages up to Rs. 25,000/- per month. The scheme covers all persons with disabilities defined under the Persons with Disabilities Act and National Trust Act.

As the scheme has been sanctioned recently, the reaction of the employers in the Private Sector is still not known.

Adoption of orphan children

†*248. SHRI AJAY MAROO:
SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY:

Will the Minister of WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the existing provisions regarding adoption of orphan children;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.